

CHILD PROTECTION ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION
April 29, 2005
NEW CASTLE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 500 KING STREET
SUPERIOUR COURT CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Those in attendance:

Members of the Commission:

The Honorable Peggy Ableman
The Honorable Patricia Blevins
Candace Charkow
 (proxy for Carlyse A. Giddins)
Carl Danberg, Esq.
 (proxy for The Honorable M. Jane Brady, Esq.)
Tania M. Culley, Esq.,
Captain Harry Downs
Peter Feliceangeli, Esq.
Sgt. Phil Hill
John Humphrey
The Honorable Jennifer Mayo
The Honorable Pamela Maier
Janice Mink
Mary Ball Morton
 (proxy for Secretary Cari DeSantis
 and proxy for Susan Cycyk)
Julia Pearce
Merrijane Pierce
Jennifer Barber Ranji, Esq., Chair

Statutory Role:

Child Protection Comm. 16 Del. C. §912(a)(10)
Member, Senate 16 Del. C. §912(a)(6)
Dir. of Div. of Family Servs. 16 Del. C. § 912 (a)(2)

Attorney General's Office 16 Del. C. § 912 (a)(3)
Executive Director
Child Protection Comm. 16 Del. C. §912(a)(10)
Attorney General's Office 16 Del. C. § 912 (a)(3)
Child Protection Comm. 16 Del. C. §912(a)(10)
Child Protection Comm. 16 Del. C. § 912 (a)(10)
Family Court 16 Del. C. § 912(a)(4)
Member, House of Reps. 16 Del. C. § 912 (a)(5)
Child Protection Comm. 16 Del. C. § 912 (a)(10)
Children's Department 16 Del. C. § 912(a)(1)

Child Placement Review Board 16 Del. C. § 912 (a)(7)
Interagency Comm. On Adoption 16 Del. C. § 12(a)(10)
Child Protection Community 16 Del. C. § 912 (a)(10)

Guests:

Lorin M. Hochman, Esq.
Joe Bakker
Anne Pedrick
Karen DeRasmo
Florence Alberque
Terri Dombrowski

Staff to the Commission, OCA
WILM
Staff to the Commission, OCA
Prevent Child Abuse Delaware
Child Death Near Death Stillbirth Commission
Public Health

I. Welcome/Introductions

II. Special Committee Reports

A. Near Death

Judge Ableman presented the report of the CPAC subcommittee's first near death review. Judge Ableman reported that the group spent close to 45 hours in meetings alone. She also recognized the hard work that Anne Pedrick and Mary Ball Morton dedicated to assembling and reviewing the materials. Judge Ableman further noted that in addition to meeting time, the subcommittee spent a tremendous amount of time drafting, editing and revising the report. Judge Ableman noted it was the best committee with which she has ever been involved.

Additionally, Judge Ableman noted that she would like to use this report and the categories contained within it as a format for fulfilling the group's statutory commitment going forward because it tracks the categories in the statute that CPAC is charged to review.

Mary Ball Morton made a motion to go into executive session. After significant discussion and notation of the fact that the prior day's subcommittee meeting to review the report was public, a vote was taken and the group voted not to go into executive session.

Following the vote, individual subcommittee members presented different recommendations contained within the report as follows:

1. Child Abuse/Neglect Reports

John Humphrey presented the recommendations of the subcommittee about child abuse/neglect reports. John noted that the task of the subcommittee was to look at the whole system and in doing so, the subcommittee noted a critical breakdown in two areas. The first was the failure of professionals to report child abuse and/or neglect and the second was DFS' failure to accept reports of child abuse and/or neglect made in this particular case. As a result, the subcommittee made 8 recommendations found in the report.

There was brief discussion about the recommendations and changes were made to the first and last recommendations.

2. Division of Family Services

Janice Mink presented the recommendations pertaining to DFS. Following discussion of the recommendations, some of the language was changed as reflected in the final report.

3. Family Court

Commissioner Mayo presented the recommendations. There was no discussion and there were no changes to the recommendations.

4. Law Enforcement

Captain Downes presented the recommendations. There was some discussion of the fact that the police are sometimes the only group that can look out for children involved in abuse and/or neglect situations that are not intrafamilial. Following this and other discussion, some changes were made as reflected in the final report.

5. Legal

Jennifer Ranji presented the recommendations which were followed by some discussion. There was strong objection to some of the recommendations and changes were made as reflected in the final report.

6. Mutli-Disciplinary Coordination and Collaboration

Sergeant Hill presented the recommendations which were accepted without modification.

7. Multi-Disciplinary Training

Commissioner Mayo presented the recommendations. Following discussion, some changes were made which were reflected in the final report.

8. Multi-Disciplinary Use of Child Welfare History in Decision Making

Mary Ball Morton presented the recommendations which induced some discussion. Following discussion, changes were made to the recommendations as reflected in the final report.

9. Office of the Attorney General

Judge Ableman presented the recommendations. Before her presentation, there was some discussion of the burden the criminal deputies face in managing their case loads. Following discussion, some changes were made to the recommendations as reflected in the final report.

After the conclusion of the presentation of the recommendations, Janice Mink made a motion to accept the report with changes; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Mayo. Fifteen votes were cast in favor with one abstention.

Following the vote, there was discussion regarding how and to whom to disseminate the report. The group agreed to distribute it to the Governor, legislators, and the public via release to the media and posting on the Office of the Child Advocate website.

There was a motion to release an abbreviated version of the report. The motion was defeated.

III. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IV. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:10 p.m.